The Original Śaṅkarācārya

The once universal Wisdom Tradition, whose existence was made known to the modern world by H. P. Blavatsky, had been preserved for long ages in the utmost secrecy. So when Blavatsky brought out a portion of it, she was faced with the problem of making these now unheard of teachings plausible. To address this, she attempted to establish the probability of the existence of such a tradition, and to support the correctness of its teachings, by reference to known authors. For this support she drew heavily on the teachings of Śaṅkarācārya. But it would seem that the Śaṅkarācārya referred to by Blavatsky and the Śaṅkarācārya whose writings have conditioned Indian thought for the last dozen centuries or so are not the same person.

Śaṅkarācārya, the preceptor (*ācārya*) Śaṅkara, is regarded by Blavatsky as a great teacher of the Wisdom Tradition, or the Esoteric Philosophy. In her primary work, *The Secret Doctrine,* he is referred to as "the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages,"[1] and as "the greatest of the Esoteric masters of India."[2] The philosophy promulgated by him, the *advaita* or non-dual school of Vedānta, is there called the nearest exponent of the Esoteric Philosophy.[3] This is because the Esoteric Philosophy, the Wisdom Tradition, is non-dual like Śaṅkarācārya's *advaita* school,[4] as opposed to the qualified non-dualism of Rāmānuja's *viśiṣṭādvaita* school, or the dualism of Madhva's *dvaita* school, of Vedānta. So we are led to believe that Śaṅkarācārya, as a great Initiate, was fully versed in the Wisdom Tradition; and that even his public teachings, the non-dual *advaita* school of Vedānta, provide the best available support for its teachings.

This assumption is further strengthened by the amount of attention given to the question of Śaṅkarācārya's date in the important series of articles called, "Some Inquiries Suggested by Mr. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism.*"[5] This series is believed to

have been written (or caused to be written) by three Mahatmas, or adepts in the Wisdom Tradition.[6] Its importance is that it purports to give replies based on the definite information held by the Mahatmas rather than on speculation. But despite this rare opportunity for direct knowledge, and as predicted by Blavatsky who thought this lengthy series was a colossal waste of the Mahatmas' time,[7] the answers given were not accepted then, nor are they now.

The then prevailing opinion, accepted by both Western scholars and their Indian counterparts, was that Śaṅkarācārya lived in the eighth century C.E.[8] An article in this series, after examining the various speculations of European orientalists on this question, gives the true date of Śaṅkarācārya's birth from the secret records:

> We may perhaps now venture to place before the public the exact date assigned to Sankaracharya by Tibetan and Indian Initiates. According to the historical information in their possession he was born in the year *B.C.* 510 (51 years and 2 months after the date of Buddha's nirvana), . . .[9]

This was published in *The Theosophist* for 1883. The next article to appear in *The Theosophist* on Śaṅkarācārya's date, a detailed three-part study by the Pandit of the Adyar Library published six years later, consciously ignored this information and concluded that "we may not be far from truth if we say that he lived somewhere about the 5th century A.C."[10] Other articles followed in *The Theosophist,* proposing other dates.[11]

Meanwhile, discussion of Śaṅkarācārya's date continued in earnest in the orientalist journals. From 1882 to 2000 more than forty articles and books on this question appeared.[12] K. B. Pathak had in 1882 published a chronogram from an obscure manuscript giving dates corresponding to 788 C.E. for Śaṅkara's birth and 820 for his death.[13] Most of the writings that followed also favored dates in the eighth century C.E., many arguing for 700 or 750 C.E. rather than 788 C.E. A few, however, proposed 509 B.C.E.,[14] in remarkable agreement with the date put forward by the Tibetan and Indian Initiates. This date of 509 B.C.E.,

moreover, comes from the very sources that one would most expect to find Śaṅkarācārya's date preserved in: the records of the *maṭhas* or monastic centers established by him.

Śaṅkarācārya is said to have founded *maṭhas* at the four cardinal points of India: the Jyotir *maṭha* near Badrinath in the North; the Govardhana *maṭha* at Puri (Jagannath) in the East; the Kālikā *maṭha* (Śāradā *pīṭha*) at Dwaraka in the West; and the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha* (again, Śāradā *pīṭha*) at Sringeri in the South. In addition to these four, he is said to have founded the Śāradā *maṭha* (Kāmakoṭi *pīṭha*) at Kanchi, also in the South. Each of these *maṭhas* has had a succession of pontiffs, who hold the title Śaṅkarācārya, from the time of the original or first (Ādi) Śaṅkarācārya. Their traditional lineage lists (*guru-paramparā*) give the names and usually the dates of each successive pontiff of that particular *maṭha*. The list of the Kālikā *maṭha* in the West gives for the birth of Śaṅkara the date 2631 of the Yudhiṣṭhira era, corresponding to 509 B.C.E.[15] The list of the Śāradā *maṭha* (at Kanchi) in the South gives the date 2593 of the Kali Yuga era, also corresponding to 509 B.C.E.[16] It is significant that two different lineage lists from two widely separated *maṭhas*, having 77 and 68 successors respectively, both go back in an unbroken line to 509 B.C.E.

The list of the Govardhana *maṭha* in the East does not give dates, but has 144 successors, about twice as many as the above two *maṭhas* have.[17] This is due to the circumstance that at this *maṭha* the successors are normally those who have gone through the householder stage of life before becoming renunciants (rather than doing so immediately after the student stage), so are older when they are chosen to become Śaṅkarācāryas.[18] So this list, too, supports the date of 509 B.C.E. The list of the Jyotir *maṭha* in the North has not yet been recovered (except for some recent centuries), since it was lost when this *maṭha* ceased to function between 1776 and 1941 C.E.[19] Even so, this *maṭha* in its current publications accepts the traditional date of 509 B.C.E. The list of the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha* in the South gives for the birth of Śaṅkara the date 3058 of the Kali Yuga era, corresponding to 44 B.C.E.[20] This list, however, having only 35 successors, gives an improbable reign of 785 years for the second successor.[21] It does

not seem to be regarded as reliable by this *maṭha*, since their current publications give instead of 44 B.C.E. for Śaṅkara's birth the commonly accepted later date of 788 C.E.[22] Thus the Jyotir *maṭha*, whose lineage list is incomplete, accepts the traditional date of 509 B.C.E., while the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha*, whose lineage list is imperfect, accepts the later date of 788 C.E. The other three *maṭhas*, in accordance with the lineage lists preserved by them, all give the date of Śaṅkara's birth as 509 B.C.E.

There are also other traditional sources that confirm the date of 509 B.C.E. One would next expect to find the date of Śaṅkara in the various biographies of him preserved in India. But the available biographies, written in Sanskrit, have proved to be of little help on this, sometimes giving astrological aspects of his birth, yet strangely, not the year.[23] There are, however, a few inaccessible but more informative ones. Far and away the most important of these is the full *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya* written by Citsukhācārya.[24] Citsukhācārya was a lifelong companion of Śaṅkara who says he "never departed from Śaṅkara from the time he left his native place until he attained his marvellous Brahmībhāva,"[25] that is, died. In other words, "he was an eye-witness of the life and doings of Śaṅkara from start to finish, and one of his direct disciples."[26] This biography gives full details of Śaṅkara's life, with dates. Although this rare text is not found in libraries, T. S. Narayana Sastry managed to obtain a manuscript of it, from which he brought out material in a book in 1916.[27] Sastry in another place quoted in full its section on Śaṅkara's birth, in the original Sanskrit, and translated this into English. It gives the date 2631 of the Yudhiṣṭhira era, corresponding to 509 B.C.E.[28] Sastry also managed to obtain copies of two other biographies not now found in libraries: the equally rare *Prācīna Śaṅkara-vijaya* by Ānandagiri, and a version of the *Vyāsācalīya Śaṅkara-vijaya* by Vyāsācala. Each of them gives, using different word-numbers, the date 2593 of the Kali Yuga era for his birth, again corresponding to 509 B.C.E.[29]

There is also epigraphic evidence supporting the date of 509 B.C.E. for Śaṅkara's birth. This is a copper plate inscription addressed to Śaṅkara by King Sudhanvan of Dwaraka, dated 2663 of the Yudhiṣṭhira era, corresponding to 477 B.C.E., the

year of Śaṅkara's death.[30] Since Śaṅkara died at the age of 32, this places his birth in 509 B.C.E.

This evidence seems quite convincing; yet it is disregarded by modern scholars, who consider it mere myth. For example, leading Indologist Hajime Nakamura in his influential book, *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy,* devotes forty pages to the question of Śaṅkara's date.[31] Before setting out his own theory that "he probably lived, roughly, 700-750 [C.E.]," Nakamura says he "will carefully go into the theories advanced hitherto on the dates of Śaṅkara," noting that "I think that what is cited below will have exhausted all the important theses."[32] Yet he does not so much as mention the view that Śaṅkara was born 509 B.C.E. His section, "The Traditional Theory of the Śāṅkara School," deals with the 788 C.E. birth date, hardly the traditional theory.

Of course, scholars such as Nakamura are not fools, and there are good reasons for disregarding the date of 509 B.C.E. and for concluding that Śaṅkara must have lived in the eighth century C.E. For example, Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* 2.2.18-32 is a refutation of Buddhist doctrines developed in the both the older Sarvāstivāda school and in the newer Vijñānavāda school. A fifty-year gap between the death of the Buddha and the birth of Śaṅkara is not nearly enough time for at least these latter doctrines to have developed. To allow for this, proponents of the 509 B.C.E. date have advocated pushing back the date of the Buddha to 1800 B.C.E.[33] But besides the fact that this conflicts with the time period of the Buddha as found in traditional Southern Buddhist sources and as determined in general by modern scholars, and also the date of the Buddha as given by the Mahatmas, it still does not solve the problem. Śaṅkara in his commentary on these verses of the *Brahma-sūtras* quotes material from the Buddhist writer Dignāga and refers to material from the Buddhist writer Dharmakīrti, who are dated in the fifth and sixth centuries C.E., respectively.[34] Thus Śaṅkara could not have lived before then.

There is an obvious solution to this dilemma, but to my knowledge none of the advocates of the 509 B.C.E. date have yet proposed it (nor has anyone else, for that matter). They take great pains to show that the 788 C.E. date actually refers to one

Abhinava or "new" Śaṅkarācārya, not to the Ādi or "original" Śaṅkarācārya. This Abhinava Śaṅkarācārya was the 38th pontiff of the Śāradā *maṭha* at Kanchi, who achieved wide fame during his lifetime, and the details of his life have been confused with those of the first Śaṅkarācārya.[35] Thus are explained the two conflicting sets of parents, places of birth, and places of death, found in the varying biographies.[36] These advocates even admit, here agreeing with Western scholars, that of the more than four hundred works attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, many must actually have been written by later Śaṅkarācāryas of the various *maṭhas*. But no one, neither Indian nor Western, questions that the commentary (*bhāṣya*) we have on the *Brahma-sūtras* is by the original or Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.[37] This work is taken to define Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. This and the commentaries on the other two of the three pillars of Vedānta (*prasthāna-traya*), namely, on the Upaniṣads and on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, form his major works.

Already in 1888, when Blavatsky gave in *The Secret Doctrine* the esoteric tradition that the Upaniṣads had been greatly abridged at the time of the Buddha, she indicated that we do not have the original commentaries on them by Śaṅkarācārya:

> Śrī Śaṃkarāchārya, the greatest Initiate living in the historical ages, wrote many a *Bhāshya* on the *Upanishads*. But his original treatises, as there are reasons to suppose, have not yet fallen into the hands of the Philistines, for they are too jealously preserved in his *maṭhas* (monasteries).[38]

Then in 1896-1897 some extraordinary articles appeared in *The Theosophist*, written with the collaboration of a blind pandit who could recite from memory a large number of lost Sanskrit texts. One of these articles stated that the now current commentary by Śaṅkarācārya on the *Bhagavad-gītā* is not the genuine one, but rather is by Nāgeśvara Bhaṭṭa. It then gives a quote from the genuine one.[39] In another of these articles the authors offered "to give to the world the genuine commentary, if not precluded by unforeseen and unavoidable events."[40] The "unforeseen and unavoidable events" may have been an allusion to the authors' concern over the lack of acceptance and even antagonism these

articles met with among the orthodox readers of *The Theosophist.* Of course, the genuine commentary never came out. In any case, the above indicates that the extant commentaries on the Upaniṣads and on the *Bhagavad-gītā* attributed to Śaṅkarācārya may not be the original and genuine ones.

But it is Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* that modern scholarship, both Eastern and Western, takes as the one unquestionable work of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. It is used as the standard by which to judge the authenticity of all the other works attributed to him. This work presents us with a dilemma not only because it quotes and refutes Buddhist writers from the fifth and sixth centuries C.E., more than a millennium after Śaṅkara is supposed to have lived, but also in regard to the unique Theosophical teaching of the relationship between Śaṅkara and the Buddha. In brief, this esoteric teaching is that the Buddha's astral remains, i.e., his intermediate principles, provided the middle principles for the *avatāra* Śaṅkara.[41] Thus there was a close relationship between the two of them. It is therefore inexplicable to Theosophists when the Śaṅkara who wrote the extant *Brahma-sūtra* commentary has these choice words to say about the Buddha and his doctrine:

> From whatever new points of view the Bauddha [Buddhist] system is tested with reference to its probability, it gives way on all sides, like the walls of a well dug in sandy soil. It has, in fact, no foundation whatever to rest upon, and hence the attempts to use it as a guide in the practical concerns of life are mere folly.—Moreover, Buddha by propounding the three mutually contradictory systems, teaching respectively the reality of the external world [the Sarvāstivāda system], the reality of ideas only [the Vijñānavāda or Yogācāra system], and general nothingness [the Śūnyavāda or Madhyamaka system], has himself made it clear either that he was a man given to make incoherent assertions, or else that hatred of all beings induced him to propound absurd doctrines by accepting which they would become thoroughly confused.—So that—and this the Sūtra means to indicate—Buddha's doctrine has to be entirely disregarded by all those who have a regard for their own happiness.[42]

The obvious solution is that the *Brahma-sūtra* commentary, taken to be the one definite work of the original Śaṅkarācārya, and the standard by which the authenticity of all the others are judged, was in fact written by a later Śaṅkarācārya. In this way only can be explained how this commentary can quote a fifth century C.E. writer, when Śaṅkarācārya is traditionally supposed to have lived in the fifth century B.C.E. The ramifications of this for the study of the Wisdom Tradition are far-reaching.

Modern Western scholars have subjected Śaṅkarācārya's writings to a type of literary criticism that had never been a part of traditional Indian scholarship. They have minutely surveyed the use of characteristic technical terms in the *Brahma-sūtra* commentary, and compared this usage of technical terms with that found in other writings attributed to him. In this way they have been able to determine that most of the commentaries on the Upaniṣads and the commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* were written by the same person who wrote the commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras*, but that virtually all the other writings attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, the many shorter works including the popular *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, "Crest Jewel of Discrimination," were not.[43] For them, this means that only these commentaries are genuine works of the original Śaṅkarācārya. For us, in accordance with the data presented above, this means just the opposite.

The major writings of Śaṅkarācārya now extant, namely his commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtras*, Upaniṣads, and *Bhagavad-gītā*, cannot be relied upon to support the Wisdom Tradition, since they were not written by the original Śaṅkarācārya. These works include important doctrines that are contradictory to the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition, and also contradictory to those of some of his other writings; that is, ones that scholars consider spurious but that we must consider genuine. Thus, Pandit N. Bhashya Charya writes in *The Theosophist* for 1890:

> The other works, such as Apárókshánubhúti, Átmánátmavivéka, Vivékachúdámani and Átmabódha cannot be his works, for they are in many respects in contradiction with philosophical conclusions found in his [Brahma-]Sútra, Upanishad, and Gitá Bháshyas.[44]

It is only some of his shorter works, such as the ones just listed, that can be relied upon to support the Wisdom Tradition, since it is only these that we can assume were actually written by the original Śaṅkarācārya.[45] The *Brahma-sūtra* commentary and the other long commentaries were not yet available in English when Blavatsky drew on Śaṅkarācārya's teachings for this support.[46] Only some of his shorter works were then available in English, such as the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*, translated by Mohini Chatterji and serialized in *The Theosophist*, 1885-1887.[47] It is to some of these shorter works that we must turn to find the original teachings of the original Śaṅkarācārya.

Śaṅkarācārya on God

Of course, the *Brahma-sūtra* commentary and the other long commentaries by the later Śaṅkarācārya would no doubt have been based largely on those of the original Śaṅkarācārya, but with some very important changes. The most important of these involves what is perhaps the greatest question in Indian religion in the last two millenniums: the question of God.

The teaching of a single non-dual reality called Brahman, that includes within it the entire universe, has always been the hallmark of Advaita Vedānta. The universal self of all, called *ātman*, is identified with Brahman. This impersonal principle goes beyond any conception of a personal God, and is therefore described as the *param* or highest Brahman, Parabrahman.

But according to the researches of modern scholarship, the author of the extant *Brahma-sūtra* commentary makes no distinction between the impersonal Brahman and the personal God, Īśvara. He does not even distinguish Parabrahman from Īśvara. In fact, his theistic interpretation is so pronounced that this usage of Īśvara, the personal God, serves to distinguish his writings from those of other Advaita Vedānta writers, even his disciples.

> . . . G. A. Jacob had observed [in 1893] that theistic terms in Śaṅkara's *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* often appeared in passages where the logic of the system seemed to call for impersonalistic and

> monistic terms, and that Śaṅkara again and again ignored the distinction between *paraṃ brahma* and *īśvara* . . . .
> . . . the theistic basis or background perceptible in Śaṅkara's monistic thought . . . indeed marks a feature which is of major relevance to an evaluation of the great thinker's personality and which distinguishes him from other philosophers of his school.[48]

German Indologist Paul Hacker sums up his landmark study, "Distinctive Features of the Doctrine and Terminology of Śaṅkara," as follows:

> Recapitulating our results so far, we can say that the words (*paraṃ*) *brahma* or *paramātman* are almost always interchangeable with *īśvara*; that *īśvara* can in most places be replaced by (*paraṃ*) *brahma* or *paramātman*; . . .
>
> This use of language is characteristic of Ś[aṅkara]. Comparisons with his disciples are, however, helpful only insofar as they establish that the word *īśvara* is used very seldom by them, whereas it occurs very frequently in the SBh [Śaṅkara's *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*]. At the same time, the concept does not appear to have had much systematic development for them. But in later Vedānta (*Pañcadaśī*, *Vedāntasāra*) Īśvara is no longer confused with Brahman. He has been given a clearly defined place in the system, namely, He is Brahman associated with *māyā*.
>
> How is this strange confusion on Ś[aṅkara]'s part to be explained?[49]

From our perspective, it is explained by the fact that this book was not written by the original Śaṅkarācārya, but by a later, theistic, Śaṅkarācārya. This allows us to understand why virtually all modern Advaita Vedāntins are theists, believers in God, when we know that this belief is not a part of the Wisdom Tradition; nor, apparently, was it part of the original teachings of the original Śaṅkarācārya. The Mahatma K.H. writes on this in a letter replying to A. O. Hume:

> In the first [letter] you notify me of your intention of studying Advaita Philosophy with a "good old Swami". The man, no

> doubt, is very good; but from what I gather in your letter, if he teaches you anything you say to me, *i.e.*, anything save an impersonal, *non*-thinking and *non*-intelligent Principle they call Parabrahm, then he will not be teaching you the *true spirit* of that philosophy, not from its esoteric aspect, at any rate.[50]

The Mahatma K.H. clearly states the position of the Wisdom Tradition on belief in God in his letters #10 and #22. In brief, this position is as follows:

> Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God, least of all in one whose pronoun necessitates a capital H.[51]

K.H. continues, specifically differentiating Parabrahman from God, Īśvara:

> Parabrahm is not a God, but absolute immutable law, and Iswar is the effect of Avidya and Maya, ignorance based on the great delusion.[52]

He says that Parabrahman is the one life taught by them:

> We are not Adwaitees, but our teaching respecting the one life is identical with that of the Adwaitee with regard to Parabrahm.[53]

He reiterates that the one life, or Parabrahman, is not God:

> If people are willing to accept and to regard as God our ONE LIFE immutable and unconscious in its eternity they may do so and thus keep to one more gigantic misnomer.[54]

He says it does matter whether or not we think of this principle as God:

> You say it matters nothing whether these laws are the expression of the will of an intelligent conscious God, as you think, or constitute the inevitable attributes of an unintelligent, unconscious "God," as I hold. I say, it matters everything, . . .[55]

A Hindu Adept affirms that Parabrahman is to be understood as an abstract principle rather than as God:

> Moreover, I assert that the PARABRAHM of the Vedantins and the "Adi-Buddha" of the northern Buddhists are identical. Both are *Abstract Principles,* or—*non*-entities; . . .[56]

How important is this question of God? In one Indian's view, the introduction of the concept of a supreme almighty God into India from the West and its thorough establishment there by Śaṅkarācārya, both in the eighth century C.E., brought about the ruin of India. He holds that India's effeteness in the past twelve hundred years, when it was ruled first by the Muslims and then by the British, is due to this theism, which had been so effectively promulgated there by Śaṅkarācārya. Of course, this refers to who we would consider to be the later Śaṅkarācārya. This author, Phulgenda Sinha, explains how through historical research he arrived at this startling conclusion:

> Considering the whole history of India from the most ancient to the contemporary period, I found a distinct dividing line in the literary and philosophical heritage of the country, making it appear as if there were two Indias—one which existed from ancient times to 800 A.D., and another which came after 800 A.D. . . .
>
> India prior to 800 A.D. produced philosophers and writers who accepted Man as the supreme being. They talked about two main entities: *Purusha* (Man) and *Prakriti* (Nature). . . . Man can liberate himself from *dukha* [sorrow or unhappiness] and can attain *sukha* (happiness) by acquiring proper knowledge, mastering certain teachings, following certain practices, and by working according to the Samkhya-yoga theory of action.
>
> India after 800 A.D. adopted quite a different outlook. The ideas proposed by writers and commentators were now mostly matters of belief and faith, colored by religion, mysticism, and caste. Not Man but God was held to be supreme. Man could do only what was predestined by God.[57]

He continues further on, after saying that religious tolerance held sway in India until about the eighth century C.E.:

> However, this condition changed when the Brahmans accepted monotheism and began interpreting the whole religious history of India, from Vedas to Upanishads, in a completely new way. The most interesting points in this interpretation were that the status of Brahmans as a caste and class was strengthened, all the gods and goddesses of Vedas were superseded by a single Almighty God, and religious persecution began with a sense of crushing the enemies. It happened with the coming of Shankaracharya.[58]

He begins his section, "An Appraisal of Shankaracharya," with:

> Shankaracharya was the first Indian to openly accept, propagate, and expound the concept of monotheism as a part of Hindu religion.[59]

He concludes his appraisal with this verdict:

> India entered into a dark age with the coming of Shankaracharya.[60]

When reading at a distance Śaṅkarācārya's philosophical treatises on non-dualism, we are apt to remain unaware of the reality of just how theistically they are understood in India, and just how pervasive the God idea is there. In his 1983 study of the modern Śaṅkarācāryas and their followers, William Cenkner reports:

> Worship is the most significant duty encouraged by the Śaṅkarācāryas; daily *pūjā* is their consistent advice. . . . The observer frequently notes the worship of personal gods even among ascetics of the Śaṅkara orders today; the practice, it is believed, was part of Ādi Śaṅkara's renovation of ascetical life.[61]

> The popular eclectic worship is based upon the tradition that Ādi Śaṅkara revived and gave stability to the six alternate ways of

> worship, the *ṣaṇmata*-s [i.e., of the six Gods]. Ascetics from the Śaṅkara orders have consistently worshipped personal gods. Śaṅkara in his commentary on the *Gītā* speaks of the six attributes of God that correspond to the six Gods, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti, Sūrya, Gaṇapati and Kumāra.[62]

T. M. P. Mahadevan, well-known scholar and exponent of Advaita Vedānta, explains that this sixfold worship came about at the request of six of Śaṅkara's disciples.

> Admitting the non-duality of the Absolute Spirit, they had their own preference in regard to the form of the Personal Godhead.[63]

After stressing the importance of God in Advaita Vedānta, he says that this importance is because, according to Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* 2.3.41:

> . . . it is by gaining knowledge that comes through God's grace that one gets released from bondage.[64]

Thus, Śaṅkarācārya is understood in India to have widely propagated the worship of a personal God, since the grace of a personal God is required for liberation. The prevalence of this teaching largely coincided with the difficult period in Indian history of foreign domination. However one may choose to judge the effects of belief in God seen in India over the past twelve hundred years, this belief is certainly due in large part to the theistic interpretation of Vedānta by the later Śaṅkarācārya. It would seem that the pure Advaita teaching of the original Śaṅkarācārya has now become thoroughly overlaid with theism, as a result of the additions made to that teaching by the Śaṅkarācārya who wrote the extant commentaries on the three pillars of Vedānta. But this theism, according to the Wisdom Tradition, is not the teaching of Vedānta as expounded by the original Śaṅkarācārya.

The most fundamental teaching of Vedānta is that of the existence of Brahman, the one reality, and of the identity of *ātman*, the self of all, with Brahman. The original Śaṅkarācārya

promulgated the Advaita, or non-dual, understanding of this ultimate principle, in direct accordance with the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition. This non-dual principle, the one life, is the most essential teaching of the hidden Wisdom Tradition. For bringing this teaching out, the world is indebted to the original Śaṅkarācārya.[65] Nowhere else in all the world's sacred writings was this taught in its fullness and its purity. The task now before the student of the Wisdom Tradition is to separate this original teaching of the original Śaṅkarācārya from its later accretions, which go under the same name.

NOTES

1. *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, 1st ed., 1888; [ed. by Boris de Zirkoff] (pagination unchanged), Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1978, vol. 1, p. 271.

2. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 86.

3. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 55.

4. See, for example, the advice given by Blavatsky to Robert Bowen on how to study *The Secret Doctrine*, where she gives as the first idea the mind must hold fast to: "The FUNDAMENTAL UNITY OF ALL EXISTENCE. This unity is a thing altogether different from the common notion of unity—as when we say that a nation or an army is united; or that this planet is united to that by lines of magnetic force or the like. The teaching is not that. It is that existence is ONE THING, not any collection of things linked together. Fundamentally there is ONE BEING." This advice is found in an article, "The 'Secret Doctrine' and Its Study," which has been reprinted several times. I here cite the above from *An Invitation to The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky, Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1988, p. 3.

5. This series of articles was published in *The Theosophist*, vols. 4, 5, Sep., Oct., Nov., 1883. It was reprinted in *Five Years of Theosophy*, 1885; 2nd ed. 1894. It was also reprinted in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1950, pp. 129-275. I use this latter edition because of the careful editorial work done in it by the compiler, Boris de Zirkoff (see p. 275).

6. This series consists of twelve parts, ten of which are unsigned, and two of which are signed by T. Subba Row, a Hindu chela (pupil) of one of the three Mahatmas who are believed to have written them.

Subba Row writes: "The 'Replies'—as every one in our Society is aware of—were written by three 'adepts' as Mr. Maitland calls them—none of whom is known to the London Lodge, with the exception of one—to Mr. Sinnett." (Cited from "Introductory Remarks by the Compiler," Boris de Zirkoff, to this series of articles reprinted in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, p. 135.) Blavatsky writes in a letter to A. P. Sinnett: "It is my Boss and two others you do not know." (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, p. 136.) In the case of the two articles signed by Subba Row, one of which is "Sri Sankaracharya's Date and Doctrine," this apparently means that he was given certain information, such as the correct date of Śaṅkarācārya, and wrote the rest based on his own knowledge.

7. This may be seen in the following excepts from *The Letters of H. P. Blavatsky to A. P. Sinnett* (1925): "Where's the necessity of writing three pages for every line of the question and explaining things that after all none of them except yourself, perhaps, will understand. . . . and who is Mr. Myers that my big Boss should waste a bucket full of his red ink to satisfy *him*? And He won't; see if he does. For Mr. Myers will *not* be satisfied with negative proofs and the evidence of the failings of European astronomers and physicists" (p. 46). "I say that these *Replies* to 'An English F.T.S.' are time lost; they will not accept the truth, and they occupy half of every number of the *Theosophist* that comes out, crowding off other matter. . ." (p. 59). "I am really sorry for these *Replies* that appear in the *Theosophist*. It does seem wisdom thrown out of the window. Well—*Their* ways *are* mysterious" (p. 63). "And I always said it was useless and time lost for no one will believe and very few will understand, *I don't*" (p. 68). "What does Mr. Myers say to the *Replies*? *Disgusted* I suppose? I thought as much. Well that's all the Adepts will get for their trouble" (p. 73).

8. As summed up by Kashinath Trimbak Telang (translator of the *Bhagavadgītā* for the Sacred Books of the East series) in his article, "The Life of Sankaracharya, Philosopher and Mystic," *The Theosophist*, vol. 1, Dec. 1879, p. 71: "Most modern scholars agree in locating him in the eighth century of the Christian era; and, since we have for this opinion the concurrent authority of Wilson, Colebrooke, Rammohan Roy, Yajnesvar Shastri, and Professor Jayanarayan Tarkapanchanam, the Bengali editor of Anandagiri's *Sankara Vijaya*, . . . we may as well accept that decision without debate."

9. "Sri Sankaracharya's Date and Doctrine," by T. Subba Row, *The Theosophist*, vol. 4, no. 12, Sep. 1883, p. 310; reprinted in *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, p. 197. Note that the "51 years and 2 months after the date of Buddha's nirvana" does not quite match the date of

this given elsewhere in this series of articles. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, p. 256, gives the date of the Buddha's *nirvāṇa* as 2544 of the Kali Yuga era. This corresponds to 558 B.C.E. See note 33 below.

It may be further noted that there is a question of interpretation in regard to another of Subba Row's statements found in this article. He writes: "It is generally believed that a person named Govinda Yogi was Sankara's guru, but it is not generally known that this Yogi was in fact Patanjali—the great author of the *Mahabhashya* and the *Yoga Sutras*—under a new name. . . . But it is quite clear from the 94th, 95th, 96th and 97th verses of the 5th chapter of Vidyaranya's *Sankara Vijaya* that Govinda Yogi and Patanjali were identical. According to the immemorial custom observed amongst initiates Patanjali assumed the name of Govinda Yogi at the time of his initiation by Gaudapada" (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, pp. 192-193).

In fact, the generally accepted understanding of these verses is that Govinda was an incarnation of Patañjali, not Patañjali himself. Compare: *The Theosophist*, vol. 11, p. 106, fn. 3, where Pandit N. Bhashya Charya writes: "Mr. T. Subba Row makes him *identical* with Patanjali, and says that Sri Sankarāchārya was a disciple of Patanjali. We believe he said so on the authority of this verse. In that case, the verse itself and the commentary thereon are quite sufficient to show that he is wrong and that Patanjali himself lived long before the time of Govindayogi." See also: vol. 10, p. 738, fn. 1. Patañjali himself was supposed to have been the guru of Gauḍapāda, who was the guru of Govinda. In any case, a difference of two generations does not affect Subba Row's basic argument in this article, that the date of Patañjali is a determining factor for the date of Śaṅkara.

10. "The Age of Srī Sankarāchārya," by Pandit N. Bhashya Charya, *The Theosophist*, vol. 11, Nov. 1889, pp. 98-107; Jan. 1890, pp. 182-185; Feb. 1890, pp. 263-272. The quotation is from p. 270. I say that he consciously ignored the date of 510 B.C. because he twice refers to the article it is found in (on p. 102, fn. 1, and on p. 106, fn. 3), citing page numbers from both *The Theosophist* and its reprint in *Five Years of Theosophy*, but nowhere even mentions this date. This is despite the fact that he examines the various traditions of Śaṅkarācārya's date, giving eight others ranging from about 56 B.C. to 1349 A.C.

11. "Śri Śankara's Date" (in Correspondence section), letter by Charles Johnston, reply by S. E. Gopalacharlu, *The Theosophist*, vol. 14, Jan. 1893, pp. 253-256. This reproduces the lineage list of the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha*, and gives equivalent Western dates, giving 43 B.C. for Śaṅkara's birth. See note 20 below. Gopalacharlu, however, rejects this date, and

states at the end that "it is impossible to maintain the theory that Sankarāchārya flourished *before* 56 B.C." (p. 256).

"The Date of Shankarāchārya," by Govinda-dāsa, *The Theosophist*, vol. 16, Dec. 1894, pp. 163-168. This gives the lineage list of the *maṭha* at Dwaraka, with its dates in the Yudhiṣṭhira era. See note 15 below. The date of Śaṅkara's birth is given as 2631 of this era. This era "is said to have lasted 3050 years, after which began *Vikrama's* Era, now [1894] in its 1951st year" (p. 164).

"The Date of Shankarāchārya," by J. S. Gadgil, *The Theosophist*, vol. 16, Feb. 1895, pp. 292-296. This cites several dates, and from them proposes three different Śaṅkarācāryas. It cites nine verses from the *Jina-vijaya*, giving the date of Śaṅkara's birth as 2157 Yudhiṣṭhira era. From this, Śaṅkara "lived about 2,838 years ago, counting back from the present year [1895]" (p. 294). This accepts that the Yudhiṣṭhira era lasted 3,044 years; but according to Narayana Sastry, this era is reckoned by Jaina writers as lasting less than that. See note 30 below.

"The Date of Sri Sankaracharya," by Siva, *The Theosophist*, vol. 21, June 1900, pp. 561-562. This cites the chronogram giving the date of Śaṅkara's birth as 788 A.D. (see note 13 below), and also cites the date of 510 B.C. given by Subba Row. It then asks if the exact date can be calculated by some astronomer from the horoscope data given in the verse he quotes from the Śaṅkara-vijaya by Vidyāraṇya (i.e., Mādhava). See notes 23 and 29 below.

"Śrī Śankarācārya: His Date, Life-Work and Teachings," by B. S. Ramasubbier, *The Theosophist*, vol. 56, Dec. 1934, pp. 293-297. This cites the date of 509 B.C. for Śaṅkara's birth, from T. S. Nārāyana Sastri, following Citsukhācārya. See note 24 below. Further on, it says: "A fragment of Citsukha's life of Śankara, in the archives of the Adyar Library, . . ." (pp. 293-294). This biography is otherwise unavailable. See note 27 below. In reply to my inquiry, the Adyar Library informed me that this fragment is a printed pamphlet in devanāgarī script, of eight pages, having no date or place of publication, with the heading, *Śrī-maṭhāmnāyaḥ*. I was able to obtain a photocopy of it from them, and its colophon indeed identifies it as a section of Citsukhācārya's *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya*. As its name implies, it concerns the *maṭhas* founded by Śaṅkarācārya, five in all, their founding and their allotted disciplines of spiritual practice.

12. These are here listed in chronological order, followed by a brief statement (in parentheses) of their position on Śaṅkarācārya's date:

"The Date of Śamkarāchārya," by K. B. Pathak, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 11, 1882, pp. 174-175 (cites a Sanskrit manuscript giving 3889 of

the Kali Yuga era for his birth, corresponding to 788 C.E., and 3921 for his death, or 820 C.E.)

"The Date of Śaṃkarāchārya," by Editor [James Burgess], *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 11, 1882, p. 263 (notes that Tiele had in 1877 given 788 C.E. for his birth)

"The Date of Śaṅkarāchārya," by K. T. Telang, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 13, 1884, pp. 95-103 (rejects 788-820 C.E., and proposes the latter half of the sixth century C.E., no later than 590 C.E.)

"A Note on the Date of Samkaracharya," by J. F. Fleet, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 16, 1887, pp. 41-42 (suggests circa 630-655 C.E., with a ten or twenty year margin of error)

"The Date of Samkaracharya," by W. Logan, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 16, 1887, pp. 160-161 (cites evidence to support the first quarter of the ninth century C.E.)

"Dharmakīrti and Śaṃkarāchārya," by K. B. Pathak, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 18, 1890-1894 (read Apr. 13, 1891), pp. 88-96 (says he flourished in the eighth century C.E., since he refers to and quotes Dharmakīrti as a classical authority)

"Bhartṛihari and Kumārila," by K. B. Pathak, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 18, 1890-1894 (read June 28, 1892), pp. 213-238 (this continues the article listed immediately above, giving more evidence for the eighth century C.E.)

"Can We Fix the Date of Śaṃkarāchārya More Accurately?," by D. R. Bhandarkar, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 41, 1912, p. 200 (supports the latter part of the eighth century C.E.)

"The Date of Śankarāchārya," by S. V. Venkatesvaran, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 43, 1914, p. 238 (proposes the earlier half of the ninth century C.E., around 825 C.E.)

"The Date of Sankaracharya," by S. V. Venkateswara, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1916, pp. 151-162 (utilizing astronomical and other evidence, gives 805-897 C.E.)

"The Date of Sarvajñātma and Śaṅkarāchārya," by A. Balakrishna Pillai, *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 50, 1921, pp. 136-137 (proposes the middle of the ninth century C.E.)

"The Date of Sankara," in *Sankaracharya the Great and His Successors in Kanchi*, by N. Venkata Raman, Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1923, pp. 17-22 (after reviewing the chronologies of the various *maṭhas* in the preceding pages, suggests the latter half of the first century C.E.)

"The Probable Date of Śaṃkara," by B. V. Kamesvar Iyer, *Proceedings and Transactions of the Fourth Oriental Conference*, Allahabad, 1926, Summaries of Papers, pp. 38-40 (seems to favor circa 600 C.E.)

"Śaṅkara: His Life and Times," in *Shree Gopal Basu Mallik Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy*, by S. K. Belvalkar, Poona: Bilvakuñja Publishing House, 1929, pp. 209-215 (gives evidence in support of 788-820 C.E.)

"The Date of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya and Some of His Predecessors," by T. R. Chintamani, *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, vol. 3, 1929, pp. 39-56 (proposes 655-687 C.E.)

"The Date of Śaṅkarācārya," by Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. 6, 1930, p. 169 (says he cannot be earlier than the fifth century C.E., because he quotes Digṅāga)

"A Note on the Date of Samkara," by S. Srikantha Sastri, *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore, n.s., vol. 20, 1930, pp. 313-316 (gives the latter half of the sixth and former half of the seventh century C.E., i.e., between 568 and 640 C.E.)

"Śaṅkarācārya and Dharmakīrtti," by Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. 9, 1933, pp. 979-980 (says he cannot be earlier than circa 635-650 C.E., because he quotes Dharmakīrti)

"The Age of Śaṃkara," by S. Srikanta Sastri, *Proceedings and Transactions of the Eighth All-India Oriental Conference*, 1935, pp. 563-572 (gives 625 C.E.)

"A Note on the Date of Śaṅkara," by K. A. Nilakantha Sastri, *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, vol. 11, 1937, pp. 285-286 (calls attention to a Cambodian inscription from between 878 and 887 C.E. by Śivasoma, who describes himself as a pupil of Śaṅkara)

"Śrī Śaṃkara in Cambodia?" by S. Srikantha Sastri, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. 18, 1942, pp. 175-179 (says the Cambodian reference cannot be to Ādi Śaṅkara, who lived towards the close of the sixth and beginning of the seventh century C.E.)

"The Date of Ādya Śamkarācārya (The 1st Century A.D.)," by V. B. Athavale, *Poona Orientalist*, vol. 19, 1954, pp. 35-39 (gives first century C.E.)

"Date of Sri Samkaracarya," by S. Srikantaya, *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, vol. 46, 1956, pp. 300-305 (accepts 789-820 C.E.)

"On the Date of Śaṃkarācārya and Allied Problems," by K. Kunjunni Raja, *Adyar Library Bulletin*, vol. 24, 1960, pp. 125-148 (says his works must have been composed towards the close of the eighth century C.E.)

"The Pīṭhas and the Date of Śankara," by P. Sastri, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. 39, 1963, pp. 160-184 (this is not a study of the lineage lists of the various *pīṭhas*, as the title might imply; based on other evidence, it places him in the fourth century C.E., apparently favoring a birth date of 333 C.E.)

"Date of Life of Śaṅkara," by S. Radhakrishnan, *Sringeri Souvenir,* Madras, 1965, pp. 38-39 (cites opinions of other scholars, but does not give his own here; elsewhere he apparently accepts 788-820 C.E.)

"Age of Śamkara and the Social Conditions of the Times," by O. Ramachandraiya, *Sringeri Souvenir,* Srirangam, 1970, pp. 22-24 (accepts 788-820 C.E.)

"The Dates of Maṇḍana Miśra and Śaṃkara," by Allen Wright Thrasher, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens,* vol. 23, 1979, pp. 117-139 (assigns him to 700 C.E. or slightly before)

"Date of Sankara," by V. G. Ramachandran, *The Voice of Śaṅkara,* Madras, vol. 6, 1981, pp. 77-88 (cites evidence in support of his birth date as 509 B.C.E.)

Shankara's Date, by R. M. Umesh, Madras: R. M. Umesh, [1981], iv + 301 pp. (gives seventh century C.E.)

"Historicity of Sankaracharya in the Light of Kerala Traditions and Tamil Epigraphic Records," by Swami Sakhyananda, in *Studies in Religion and Change,* ed. Madhu Sen, New Delhi: Books & Books, 1983, pp. 73-78 (accepts 508 B.C.E. for the birth of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, and gives 805 C.E. for the birth of a later Śaṅkarācārya at Kaladi in Kerala, different from Abhinava Śaṅkarācārya who lived 788-840 C.E.)

"On the Date of Maṇḍana Miśra and Śaṅkara and Their Doctrinal Relation," by Fernando Tola, *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute,* vol. 70, 1989, pp. 37-46 (holds that it is not possible to place Śaṅkara more precisely than between the middle of the seventh and the end of the eighth centuries C.E.)

"On the Dates of Śaṃkara and Maṇḍana," by K. Kunjunni Raja, *Adyar Library Bulletin,* vol. 55, 1991, pp. 104-116 (supports circa 750-800 C.E.)

"Date of Śrī Śaṅkara," in *Śrī Śaṅkara: His Life, Philosophy and Relevance to Man in Modern Times,* by S. Sankaranarayanan, Adyar, Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1995, Appendix I, pp. 269-287 (while not fixing a definite date, proposes that he lived much earlier than the seventh-eighth centuries C.E.)

"Date of Śrī Śaṅkara—A New Perspective," by S. Sankaranarayanan, *Adyar Library Bulletin,* vol. 59, 1995, pp. 132-176 (offers a working hypothesis that he might have flourished earlier than 500 C.E.)

"A Note on Śaṃkara's Date," by K. Kunjunni Raja, *Adyar Library Bulletin,* vol. 59, 1995, p. 177 (briefly counters Sankaranarayanan's article, listed immediately above)

See also note 14 below for six more listings.

13. K. B. Pathak, "The Date of Śamkarāchārya," *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 11, 1882, pp. 174-175. The birth date of 788 C.E. had been given earlier by C. P. Tiele in his book, *Outlines of the History of Religion, to the Spread of the Universal Religions*, London: Trübner & Co., 1877, p. 140. Although not stated, this apparently was taken from Albrecht Weber's *Indische Studien*, vol. 14, Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1876, p. 353. Weber had cited this date from "Āryavidyāsudhānidhi, p. 226." This, in fact titled *Āryavidyāsudhākaraḥ*, is a modern book in Sanskrit written in 1866 by Yajñeśvara Cimaṇa Bhaṭṭa, Bombay: Gaṇpat Kṛṣṇaji's Press, 1868. The relevant passage from this now rare book is quoted and translated by Paul Deussen in his *Das System des Vedānta*, Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1883, pp. 37-38 fn.; this book translated into English by Charles Johnston as *The System of the Vedānta*, Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1912, pp. 35-36 fn.

14. The books proposing 509 B.C.E. as Śaṅkara's date of birth that were primarily used in this article are:

Narayana Sastry, T. S., *The Age of Śankara*, 2nd enlarged edition, edited by T. N. Kumaraswamy, Madras: B. G. Paul & Co., 1971 (1st ed., Madras: 1916, with the spelling Sastri). This is the only biography to use Citsukhācārya's *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya*, which is the only traditional biography that is a firsthand account, that gives dates, and that is not embellished with myth. Sastry's book was to have additional parts, but these were never published due to the death of the author.

Kuppūswāmī, A., *Śrī Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarācārya*, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies vol. 89, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1972. This biography utilizes all available sources, and cites them all when their views on various aspects of Śaṅkara's life differ.

Udayavir Shastri, *The Age of Shankara*, translated into English by Lakshmi Datta Dikshit, Gaziabad: Virjanand Vedic Research Institute, 1981 (originally written in Hindi, apparently in 1968, and though not stated, this is presumably part of *Vedāntadarśana kā Itihāsa*, published circa 1970). This book includes all the available lineage lists of the Śaṅkarācāryas of the various *maṭhas*. I have used it primarily for this.

Other books proposing 509 B.C.E. as Śaṅkara's date of birth that were consulted are:

Nataraja Aiyer, A., and Lakshminarasimha Sastri, S., *The Traditional Age of Sri Sankaracharya and the Maths*, Madras: Thompson & Co., 1962.

Ramachandran, V. G., *Date of Adi Sankara*, Madras: International Society for the Investigation of Ancient Civilizations, 1985.

S. D. Kulkarni, ed., *Adi Sankara: The Saviour of Mankind*, Bombay:

Shri Bhagavan Vedavyasa Itihasa Samshodhana Mandira (Bhishma), 1987, Part II, "Date of Śaṅkara," pp. 275-294.

15. The lineage list of the Kālikā *maṭha* (Śāradā *pīṭha*) at Dwaraka is given by Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 33-35. Its date 2631 has sometimes been wrongly taken as being of the Kali Yuga era. See on this: Udayavir Shastri, pp. 36-38; see also: Narayana Sastry, op. cit., p. 236. The list itself, however, specifies the Yudhiṣṭhira era, which began in 3139 or 3140 B.C.E., 37 or 38 years before the Kali Yuga began in 3102 B.C.E. There is a possible one year difference in converting an Indian date to a B.C.E. date, depending on whether the Indian era it is given in is counted in current or in elapsed years (normally the latter), and also depending on whether that era starts at some point within the corresponding B.C.E. year, such as in July.

16. The lineage list of the Śāradā *maṭha* (Kāmakoṭi *pīṭha*) at Kanchi is given by Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 38-40; and by Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 194-197. The Kali Yuga era began Feb. 18, 3102 B.C.E.

17. The lineage list of the Govardhana *maṭha* at Puri is given by Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 41-43. The numbers of successors of the various *maṭhas* cited here are as of the date this book was originally written (in Hindi), 1968.

18. See on this: Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 40-41, 43; see also: Cenkner, William, *A Tradition of Teachers: Śaṅkara and the Jagadgurus Today*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983; reprint 1995, pp. 125, 157.

19. On the break in lineage of the Jyotir *maṭha* near Badrinath, see: Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 45-46; Cenkner, op. cit., pp. 111, 126. Its partial lineage list, from 1443 or 1497 C.E. to 1776, is given by Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

20. The lineage list of the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha* (Śāradā *pīṭha*) at Sringeri is given by Udayavir Shastri, op. cit, pp. 59-60; and by Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 200-201. An attempt to explain how the date 3058 of the Kali Yuga era, corresponding to 44 B.C.E., arose as a confusion of the real date is made by Narayana Sastry, pp. 208-212, 235-237.

21. The reign of 785 years is according to the lineage list given by Narayana Sastry (see note 20); Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 61-62, gives this reign as 725 years. The Śṛṅgerī *maṭha* lineage list published in *Mysore and Coorg: A Gazetteer Compiled for the Government of India*, by Lewis Rice, vol. I, Bangalore: Mysore Government Press, 1877, p. 380, seems to have given this reign as 800 years, as may be deduced from Rice's footnote. The Śṛṅgerī *maṭha* lineage list published by S. E. Gopalacharlu in *The Theosophist*, vol. 14, 1893, p. 255, also gives this reign as 800 years. A lineage list having 56 successors with their dates,

filling in the gap of 700 plus years, was "procured from the records of Śṛingerī" by Janārdan Sakhārām Gāḍgil and published in "A Note on the Age of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī," by Kāshināth Trimbak Telang, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 10, no. 30, 1874, pp. 368-377. The same list was also published in "Gurus of the Sringeri Math," by A. Siva Row, *The Theosophist*, vol. 14, no. 7, April 1893, pp. 446-448. However, this is actually the lineage list of the Kudalī *maṭha*, and not of the Śṛṅgerī *maṭha*, with which it is affiliated. Compare the lineage list of the Kudalī *maṭha* given by Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 62-63. Still, there is some possibility that this list does preserve the Śṛṅgerī lineage for this 700 plus year period, since the history of these two *maṭhas* as distinct from each other during that time is obscure. Extracts from a *Guru-paramparā-stotra*, apparently of the Kudalī *maṭha*, were published in *Reports on Sanskrit Manuscripts in Southern India*, by E. Hultzsch, no. III, Madras: Government Press, 1905, as no. 2146i, on pp. 133-135. This lineage hymn is noteworthy for saying that Śaṅkara died at Kanchi. See note 36 below.

22. See on this: Kuppūswāmī, op. cit., p. 22. See also, for example: *The Greatness of Sringeri*, Bombay: Tattvaloka, 1991, pp. 4, 38, giving the date of Śaṅkara's birth as 788 C.E. The Śṛṅgerī lineage list published therein, p. 123, incorporates the dates 788-820 C.E. for Śaṅkarācārya, as does the lineage list published in the *Sringeri Souvenir*, Madras, 1965, pp. 96-97. The Śaṅkarācārya of Śṛṅgerī said in a 1989 interview, "It can be accepted that Śaṅkara was born twelve or so centuries ago." This statement is found in: Bader, Jonathan, *Conquest of the Four Quarters: Traditional Accounts of the Life of Śaṅkara*, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2000, p. 334; see also p. 19, fn. 6.

23. The most widely known Sanskrit biography of Śaṅkara is that by Mādhava, now popularly called the *Śaṅkara-dig-vijaya*. It gives some horoscope data, but no year. The next most widely known biography of Śaṅkara is the *Śaṅkara-vijaya* commonly attributed to Ānandagiri, but actually by Anantānandagiri. It gives no information on the time of his birth. Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 32-33, lists ten Śaṅkara-vijayas, or biographies, that he collected, and gives the data relating to Śaṅkara's birth from all of them. The data from the seven which do not give Śaṅkara's date is found on pp. 237-263. Kuppūswāmī, op. cit., pp. 9-15, lists eleven biographies, including four not used by Narayana Sastry. These four do not give Śaṅkara's date either. Bader, *Conquest of the Four Quarters*, p. 24, lists eight biographies, including two not used by Narayana Sastry. These two likewise do not give his date. Current bibliographical information on these eight is given on pp. 357-358.

24. On Citsukhācārya and his *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya*, see: Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 39-40 fn., 224-226 fn. On pp. 271-282 is given from it in Sanskrit and English the whole chapter on Śaṅkara's birth. Narayana Sastry then concludes: "Such is the simple account of the birth of Sankara as narrated by Chitsukhacharya in his biography of Sri Sankaracharya known as Brihat Sankara Vijaya. The life history of the Great Guru as depicted by him is throughout natural and unexaggerated, and clearly bears the unmistakable impress of an eye-witness and a contemporary writer. Chitsukha has, indeed, the highest regard for Sankara, . . . and yet he dealt with him only as a man. . . . He certainly does not go to the length of deifying him and his disciples and contemporaries as various incarnations of gods, nor does he colour his life with supernatural incidents and divine interferences, with which later Sankara Vijayas, including that of Anandagiri, are replete. . . .

"The incidents of the Gods including Brahmadeva going to Mount Kailasa and praying to God Sadasiva for giving a quietus to the warring faiths and creeds in Bharata varsha, His solemn promise to the Gods that He would be born as Sri Sankaracharya on the earth to put down the wicked creeds and teachings prevalent among men, His graceful presence before the pious couple, Aryamba and Sivaguru, asking them to choose between one short-lived omniscient son and one hundred long-lived idiots and His appearance before Aryamba at the time of his birth in the form of the Great God Siva Himself, with four hands, three eyes and a head wearing the crescent of the Moon as the diadem of His Crown are all later additions, of which incidents there is absolutely no reference in the great work of Chitsukhacharya" (pp. 281-283).

25. Narayana Sastry, op. cit., p. 40 fn. Brahmībhāva means identity with Brahman (Narayana Sastry, p. 180). The original Sanskrit of this or a similar sentence is quoted in the *Suṣumā* commentary on the *Guru-ratna-mālikā* of Sadāśiva Brahmendra, and given by W. R. Antarkar in his article, "Bṛhat-Śaṅkara-Vijaya of Citsukhācārya and Prācīna-Śaṅkara-Vijaya of Ānandagiri a/s Ānanda-jñāna," *Journal of the University of Bombay*, vol. 29 (n.s.), 1960, p. 114 fn. On p. 115, Antarkar says: "It is also worth noting that Citsukha's version of Śaṅkara's life as given by Mr. Śāstrī [Narayana Sastry], which differs from the versions of the same in all the other biographies in Sanskrit, eminently agrees with the one as culled from the quotations from Br[hat]. Ś[aṅkara]. V[ijaya]. in Suṣumā." *Suṣumā* was published in *Vedāntapañcaprakaraṇī*, Sadāśivendra Sarasvatī, Kumbhakonam: Śrī Vidyā Press, 1813 [1891].

26. Narayana Sastry, op. cit., p. 40 fn.

27. *The Age of Śankara*; see note 14. The manuscript of the *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya* used by Narayana Sastry seems to have disappeared when he died in 1918 at age 48. His son writes in the preface to the 2nd ed. of *The Age of Śankara*, "Death overtook him at the prime of life and prevented him from fulfilling his intentions. The manuscripts containing valuable matter were lost, leaving no trace behind." This refers to manuscripts of the promised remaining parts of *The Age of Śankara*, as well as to the Sanskrit manuscripts he used. Bader, *Conquest of the Four Quarters*, p. 347 fn., reports that: "W. R. Antarkar has informed me that he met the author's son but was unable to trace this sole MS. of the work." Antarkar, in his article cited in note 25 above, says that the *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya*, as well as the *Prācīna Śaṅkara-vijaya*, "did not become available to me even after an intensive search for them throughout India" (p. 113). Still, after giving other evidence, he closes this article as follows: "It, therefore, can be concluded that there did exist till recently two such works as Br. Ś.V. [*Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya*] of Citsukhācārya and Pr. Ś.V. [*Prācīna Śaṅkara-vijaya*] of Ānandajñāna a/s Ānandagiri though none of them is available to us today and that they are not mere names, as believed by some" (p. 129).

28. Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 273, 278, verses 12-13. This is from his book, *Successors of Śaṅkarāchārya*, 1916, reprinted in the 2nd ed. of *The Age of Śankara* as appendix III, pp. 193-288.

29. On the *Prācīna Śaṅkara-vijaya* by Ānandagiri, not to be confused with the published *Śaṅkara-vijaya* attributed to Ānandagiri but actually by Anantānandagiri, see: Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 227-228 fn. On pp. 264-270 the data from it on Śaṅkara's birth is given. More than 800 verses from this otherwise lost *Prācīna Śaṅkara-vijaya* are quoted in the commentary by Dhanapatisūri on the *Śankara-dig-vijaya* of Mādhava. These have all been conveniently collected in an appendix to the *Śrī Śaṅkaravijaya of Anantānandagiri*, edited by N. Veezhinathan, Madras: University of Madras, 1971.

On the *Vyāsācalīya Śaṅkara-vijaya*, a *Śaṅkaravijaya* by Vyāsācala was published in 1954, edited by T. Chandrasekharan, in the Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Series, no. 24; but again, as with other extant Śaṅkara-vijayas, the date references were no longer to be found in the six manuscripts this edition was based on. Narayana Sastry, too, at first had only such a manuscript to work from. In his comments on this book, op. cit., pp. 228-229 fn., he writes: "I had only an imperfect copy of this valuable Sankara Vijaya of Vyasachala, but thanks to the Kumbhakonam Mutt, I have recently secured a complete

copy of the said book, . . ." From it, he cites nine verses in Sanskrit giving the place and date of Śaṅkara's death, with English translation, pp. 228-235, and two verses on Śaṅkara's birth, pp. 245-249. The first of these two verses gives the year, month, and day; while the second adds astrological data, being the very same verse as that found in the popular *Śaṅkara-vijaya* by Mādhava. See notes 23 above and 36 below. Thus when Mādhava adopted verses from Vyāsācala, he left out the verse giving Śaṅkara's date, and kept only the verse giving astrological data, from which no date could be deduced.

30. See: Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 217-221. On pp. 220-221 fn. is given the full Sanskrit text of this inscription. See also pp. 33, 153 ff. This copper plate inscription was first published by Śrī Rājarājeśvara Śaṅkarāśrama, the Śaṅkarācārya of the *maṭha* at Dwaraka from 1878 to 1900, in his Sanskrit book, *Vimarśa,* Varanasi: Rājarājeśvarīyantrālaya, Vikrama Saṃvat 1955 [1898 C.E.], p. 29 (not seen by me). This copper plate was said to be in the possession of the *maṭha* at Dwaraka until about 1903-1904, at which time it was turned over to a court of law, and never received back. For much information on it, its text from the *Vimarśa,* and also a critique of its authenticity, see: "The Sudhanvan Copper-plate—A Dispassionate Reappraisal," by V. Venkatachalam, in *Śrī Sureśvarācārya Adhiṣṭhāna Jīrnoddhāraṇa Kumbhābhiṣekam: Sringeri. Souvenir,* May 10, 1970, pp. 86-110. On King Sudhanvan, independent information is found in a Jaina source, the *Jina-vijaya.* See Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 149 fn., 152-153 fn., quoting this from the Sanskrit journal, *Saṃskṛta-Chandrikā* (Kolhapur), vol. 9, p. 6.

The *Jina-vijaya,* a biographical poem on the life of Mahāvīra, also provides independent evidence taken to support the date of 509 B.C.E. for Śaṅkara. The date 2157 of the Yudhiṣṭhira era is given in it for Śaṅkara, understood by Narayana Sastry to mean for his death. The verses from the *Jina-vijaya* pertaining to this are cited by Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 149-153 fn., 232-234 fn. According to Narayana Sastry, the Yudhiṣṭhira era used by Jainas and Buddhists and other non-Hindus is different than that used by Hindus. This Yudhiṣṭhira era began 468 years after the Kali Yuga era began, or in 2634 B.C.E.; see on this: pp. 22, 149 fn., 235. Using this era, the date 2157 given in the *Jina-vijaya* corresponds to 477 B.C.E., the date of Śaṅkara's death. Kuppūswāmī, op. cit., pp. 30-31, also cites this same *Jina-vijaya* verse on the date of Śaṅkara, again taking it for that of his death, though wrongly stating that the era starting in 2634 B.C.E. is the Jina Era. We must note, however, that the nine verses from the *Jina-vijaya* cited by Gadgil in *The Theosophist* (see note 11 above), of which this is the first,

present this date 2157 as that of his birth, and later give the date 2189 as that of his death. These nine verses were cited from the book, *Bhāratavarshīya Arvāchīna Kosha*, by Raghunāth Bhāskar Godbole of Poona. Further, these verses confuse some of the details of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's life with those of Abhinava Śaṅkarācārya, as do the various Śaṅkara-vijayas, even though the *Jina-vijaya* distinguishes these two Śaṅkarācāryas, while the Śaṅkara-vijayas do not. See notes 35 and 36 below. The information from the yet unpublished *Jina-vijaya*, when sorted out, will provide valuable independent evidence on the date of Śaṅkara.

The *Jina-vijaya* is, moreover, not a sympathetic source; as it was the Jainas, not the Buddhists, who were in conflict with Hinduism in Śaṅkara's time. Popular accounts say repeatedly that Śaṅkara came to destroy Buddhism and restore Hinduism. But according to Narayana Sastry, who had access to the genuine biographies of Śaṅkara, this is not the case. The famous Hindu teacher Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, who was on his deathbed when Śaṅkara met him, had been a strong opponent of the Jainas. Later biographies confused the Jainas with the Buddhists, and attributed to Śaṅkara an opposition toward them like that shown by Kumārila. Narayana Sastry, pp. 148-149 fn., writes: "One thing is quite clear from a careful perusal of these various Śaṅkara Vijayas, that the later biographers have invariably confounded the Jainas with the Bauddhas, by considering them for all practical purposes as one sect. . . . But Chitsukha distinctly says that Kumārila's opponents were Mahāvīra and his followers called the Jainas, and that he directed his energies against the Jains alone who under their founder Mahāvīra Vardhamāna, began to undermine the Vedic Brāhmanism in his day." Narayana Sastry cites 28 verses in Sanskrit from Citsukhācārya's *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya* showing this, pp. 146-148 fn. The research of W. R. Antarkar adds to this, saying about these 28 verses of Citsukhācārya: "Sadānanda and Cidvilāsa repeat, in the same context, many of these stanzas almost verbatim, of course omitting many and making small but very important changes in those they have adopted. The most important alteration is that the Jainas and Vardhamāna Mahāvīra in Citsukha's version have been replaced in both by Bauddhas and a Bauddha Guru" (from his article, "Bṛhat-Śaṅkara-Vijaya . . . ," p. 116; see note 25 above).

31. Nakamura, Hajime, *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy*, Part One, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983, pp. 48-88.

32. Nakamura, *History of Early Vedānta Philosophy*, pp. 87, 48.

33. Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. viii, 12, 119 fn., 137, 145 fn., gives

the date of the Buddha as 1862 to 1782 B.C., based on the Purāṇas and Itihāsas. This calculation was to be given in his Appendix B, but this was never published. Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 137, 139, 158, 162, gives the date of the Buddha as "about 1800 B.C.," based on the *Rāja-taraṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa. While the Wisdom Tradition teaches that there were previous Buddhas, and therefore that Buddhism existed before Gautama Buddha, for this Buddha it supports the traditional date of his death given in Ceylon chronology as 543 B.C.E. It adds, however, that he lived for a little more than twenty years after his *nirvāṇa*, thus placing his birth in 643 B.C.E. See: "Sakya Muni's Place in History," *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, pp. 241-259. These dates are said to be correct according to *bārhaspatya-māna* reckoning, from which we may deduce that they actually correspond with 637 to 537 B.C.E. See: "Inscriptions Discovered by General A. Cunningham," by T. Subba Row, *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, pp. 259-262.

34. The fact that half a verse from Dignāga's *Ālambana-parīkṣā* is quoted in Śaṅkara's commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* 2.2.28 was first noted by Durga Charan Chatterjee, and published in a brief article by his teacher Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya, "The Date of Śaṅkarācārya," *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. 6, 1930, p. 169. On the material from Dharmakīrti that Śaṅkara refers to, also in his commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* 2.2.28, see: Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, "Śaṅkarācārya and Dharmakīrtti," *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. 9, 1933, pp. 979-980. Earlier, S. V. Venkateswara in his article, "The Date of Sankaracharya," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1916, p. 154, had pointed out that: "Sureśvarāchārya, a disciple of Śaṇkara's, has written a *vārṭika* to the latter's poem *Upadeśa Sāhasri.* In the *vārṭika*, Sureśvara remarks that the Āchārya has borrowed a verse from Kīrti (*kīrter idaṃ*). This Kīrti could be no other than Dharma Kīrti who, as we know, flourished in the seventh century." Apparently unknown to Venkateswara, already in 1891 K. B. Pathak had shown that it is Dharmakīrti who Śaṅkara refutes in his commentary on the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, and from whom he borrows a verse in his *Upadeśa-sāhasrī.* Pathak in his paper, "Dharmakīrti and Śaṃkarāchārya," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 18, 1890-1894 (read Apr. 13, 1891), pp. 88-96, writes: "This inference is confirmed by a long and interesting passage which I have discovered in the Bṛhadāraṇyakavārtika and in which Sureśvarāchārya, the disciple and contemporary of Śaṃkarāchārya, actually names and attacks Dharmakīrti" (p. 90). After citing this whole passage in Sanskrit and translating it, Pathak goes on to show that Śaṅkara quotes a verse from Dharmakīrti in his *Upadeśa-sāhasrī.*

The date of Dignāga is given as circa 480-540 C.E. by Erich Frauwallner in "Landmarks in the History of Indian Logic," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens,* vol. 5, 1961, pp. 134-137. Masaaki Hattori had independently arrived at 470-530 C.E. See his: *Dignāga, On Perception,* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968, pp. 4-6. The date of Dharmakīrti is given as circa 600-660 C.E. by Frauwallner, pp. 137-139. This has been modified to 530-600 C.E. by Chr. Lindtner. See his two articles: "Apropos Dharmakīrti—Two New Works and a New Date," *Acta Orientalia,* vol. 41, 1980, pp. 27-37; and "On the Date of Dharmakīrti Etc.," *Adyar Library Bulletin,* vol. 56, 1992, pp. 56-62. These dates for Dignāga and Dharmakīrti are supported by traditional Buddhist sources in so far as the latter place the brothers Asaṅga and Vasubandhu 900 years after the death of the Buddha, and say that Dignāga was a pupil of Vasubandhu, and that Dharmakīrti was a pupil of a pupil of Dignāga. See: *History of Buddhism (Chos-ḥbyung) by Bu-ston,* trans. E. Obermiller, 2 vols., Heidelberg, 1931, 1932; and *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India,* trans. Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, ed. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, Calcutta: K. P. Bagchi & Company, 1970.

35. On Abhinava Śaṅkara, see: Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. ix, 31, 33, 109, 199, 237, 244-245; Kuppūswāmī, op. cit., pp. 33-35. Udayavir Shastri, op. cit., pp. 56-58, believes that 788 C.E. is the date of Abhinava Śaṅkara's installation as Śaṅkarācārya of the *maṭha* at Kanchi rather than the date of his birth. Abhinava Śaṅkara is also distinguished from Ādi Śaṅkara in the *Jina-vijaya.* See on this: J. S. Gadgil, *The Theosophist,* 1895, article listed in note 11 above.

36. The widely known Śaṅkara-vijaya by Mādhava (often confused with Mādhava Vidyāraṇya), accepted by the *maṭha* at Sringeri as the most authoritative Śaṅkara biography, states that Śaṅkara was born at the town of Kalati in Kerala state, his father was Śivaguru and his mother was Āryāmbā, and he died at Kedarnath in the Himalayas. The other widely known Śaṅkara-vijaya, written by Anantānandagiri (often confused with Ānandagiri), accepted by the *maṭha* at Kanchi as the most authoritative Śaṅkara biography, states that Śaṅkara was born at the town of Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu state, his father was Viśvajit and his mother was Viśiṣṭā, and he died at Kanchi in Tamil Nadu. A new edition of this biography came out in 1971 (see note 29 above) that adopted different readings than those of the earlier two editions, in agreement with seven of the sixteen manuscripts used, giving his birthplace as Kalati (Kālaḍi) and his father as Śivaguru. This is as given in the biography by Mādhava. It retained, however, Śaṅkara's place of

death as Kanchi, in agreement with all the manuscripts.

Comparison with the several other Śaṅkara biographies provides an overwhelming preponderance of evidence that Śaṅkara was born at Kalati, his parents were Śivaguru and Āryāmbā, and his place of death was Kanchi. This would be Ādi Śaṅkara. Abhinava Śaṅkara, then, was born at Chidambaram, his parents were Viśvajit and Viśiṣṭā, and he died at Kedarnath. The confusion of these basic facts in the two major biographies does not inspire confidence in whatever other statements they may make.

Subba Row in his article on Śaṅkarācārya's date had pointed out the unreliability of the Śaṅkara-vijaya attributed to Ānandagiri (but actually by Anantānandagiri). However, he goes on to say that the one by Vidyāraṇya or Sāyaṇācārya (our Mādhava, above) is "decidedly the most reliable source of information as regards the main features of Sankara's biography" (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 5, p. 192). This view was no doubt due to his connections with the *maṭha* at Sringeri, as this is the biography that they regard as authoritative. He says that "its authorship has been universally accepted," referring to the fact that Vidyāraṇya or Sāyaṇācārya was a great commentator on the Vedas and a famous head of the *maṭha* at Sringeri. Actually, this authorship has been strongly questioned, and now proven beyond doubt to be false. The Mādhava who wrote it was not Mādhava Vidyāraṇya, as assumed by the *maṭha* at Sringeri and also by Subba Row.

The Śaṅkara-vijaya by Mādhava, as has now been shown, is a composite work, consisting mostly of verses taken directly from other Śaṅkara-vijayas. One of these, the *Śaṅkarābhyudaya* by Rājacūḍāmaṇi-Dīkṣita, was written in the 1600s C.E., as we know from the fact that this author gives the date corresponding to 1636 C.E. in another of his works. This is three centuries after Mādhava Vidyāraṇya lived. The composite nature of Mādhava's book was pointed out by Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 155-167 fn., 245-253; detailed by W. R. Antarkar in his unpublished thesis, "Śaṅkara-Vijayas: A Comparative and Critical Study," University of Poona, 1960, and in his published article, "Saṅkṣepa Śaṅkara Jaya of Mādhavācārya or Śāṅkara Digvijaya of Śrī Vidyāraṇyamuni," *Journal of the University of Bombay*, vol. 41 (n.s.), 1972, pp. 1-23; and again by Bader, *Conquest of the Four Quarters*, pp. 53-62, 351-356. Mādhava's incorrect placing of Śaṅkara's death at Kedarnath in the Himalayas rather than at Kanchi in south India is apparently due to the dispute which arose in the early 1800s between followers of the *maṭhas* at Sringeri and Kanchi. The former do not think Kanchi is a legitimate *maṭha*. If Śaṅkara died at Kanchi, that fact would lend

credence to its legitimacy as a *maṭha*. The evidence on his place of death from each of the many traditional sources may be found in Kuppūswāmī, op. cit., pp. 130-141. The evidence on this from several sources may also be found in "The Last Days of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya," by N. K. Venkatesan, *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, vol. 1, part 4, Oct. 1927, pp. 330-335.

The biography of Śaṅkara by Mādhava is the only one of these Śaṅkara-vijayas that has been translated into English. This has been translated twice: first by Swami Tapasyananda, *Sankara-Dig-Vijaya: The Traditional Life of Sri Sankaracharya*, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978; and then by K. Padmanaban, *Srimad Sankara Digvijayam*, 2 vols., Madras: K. Padmanaban, 1985, 1986 (includes original Sanskrit text). Both these translators also attribute this book to Mādhava Vidyāraṇya. Swami Tapasyananda in his Introduction rejects the information from Narayana Sastry's book, which is based on the biography of Śaṅkara by Citsukhācārya, since the latter is not available. He makes much of the fact that Narayana Sastry described the manuscript he had of it as a "mutilated copy." Actually, this refers to the circumstance that this copy was missing the first part, on the predecessors of Śaṅkara, and the last part, on the successor Sureśvara. See: Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 40 fn., 226 fn., 271 fn. It was the middle part that gave the life of Śaṅkara, and this is the part that Narayana Sastry had. His quotations of lengthy sections from it show that the leaves he had were intact. Based on comparison of this and other Śaṅkara-vijayas with that of Mādhava, Narayana Sastry became a harsh critic of the latter.

37. See, for example: Narayana Sastry, op. cit., pp. 31, 83-85: "There are innumerable works, large and small, which go under the name of Śaṅkarāchārya, and it is really impossible at this distant period of time to determine with certainty which of them were the handworks of Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya, and which were written by his successors. But it is really fortunate that all scholars should uniformly agree in ascribing the Bhāshyas on the Prasthāna-Traya to the First Śaṅkarāchārya . . . ." "Whole hosts of commentators have commented upon the Brahma Sūtras but they all want the boldness, depth, originality and simplicity of Śaṅkara. In fact Śaṅkara's Bhāshya is not only the most important, but also the oldest of the commentaries extant on the Brahma Sūtras. As a piece of philosophical argumentation, it occupies the highest rank among the numerous commentaries on the Vedānta Sūtras."

As for Western scholars, see, for example, Paul Deussen's *The System of the Vedanta* (trans. by Charles Johnston from German), p. 37: "His master-piece is the Commentary on the Brahmasūtra's, . . . which

gives a substantially complete and sufficient picture of his system, and from which alone we draw our exposition of it, in order in this way to form a safe standard by which the genuineness of the other works attributed to Śaṅkara, the minor writings, as well as the Commentaries to the Upanishad's, may subsequently be tested."

38. *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, p. 271.

39. This article is: "Dhritarāshtra," by Purmeshri Dass and Dhanraj, *The Theosophist*, vol. 18, Sep. 1897, pp. 749-750.

40. See: "Genuineness of Commentaries," by Purmeshri Dass and Dhauaraj, *The Theosophist*, vol. 19, Nov. 1897, pp. 110-111.

41. See: "The Mystery of Buddha," by H. P. Blavatsky, *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 14, Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1985, pp. 388-399. See also note 65 below.

42. *The Vedānta Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa, with the Commentary by Śaṅkara*, translated by George Thibaut, Part I, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890, Sacred Books of the East vol. 34, pp. 427-428; from the commentary on verse 2.2.32. It has been reprinted several times. I quote from this translation, as it is the most widely available. Another good translation of this book is: *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya*, translated by Swami Gambhirananda, Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1965. Note that *Vedānta-sūtras* and *Brahma-sūtras* are alternate titles for the same book.

43. Paul Hacker provided the basis for this study with his article, "Eigentümlichkeiten der Lehre und Terminologie Śaṅkaras: Avidyā, Nāmarūpa, Māyā, Īśvara," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 100, 1950, pp. 246-286; now translated into English as "Distinctive Features of the Doctrine and Terminology of Śaṅkara: Avidyā, Nāmarūpa, Māyā, Īśvara," in *Philology and Confrontation: Paul Hacker on Traditional and Modern Vedānta*, edited by Wilhelm Halbfass, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 57-100.

Sengaku Mayeda then utilized this criteria in a series of articles:

"The Authenticity of the Upadeśasāhasrī Ascribed to Saṅkara," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 85, 1965, pp. 178-196.

"The Authenticity of the Bhagavadgītābhāṣya Ascribed to Śaṅkara," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens*, vol. 9, 1965, pp. 155-197.

"On Śaṅkara's Authorship of the Kenopaniṣadbhāṣya," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, vol. 10, 1967, pp. 33-55.

"On the Author of the Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad- and the Gauḍapādīya-bhāṣya," *Adyar Library Bulletin*, vols. 31-32, 1967-68, pp. 73-94.

Daniel H. H. Ingalls rejected Śaṅkara's authorship of the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* in his article, "The Study of Śaṃkarācārya," *Annals of the*

Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, vol. 33, 1952, pp. 1-14. Since this journal is not readily available to all readers, I here quote the relevant portion in full, giving his reasons for this (p. 7):

"Thus, to come to a specific instance, it is improbable that Śaṃkara wrote the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*. The improbable becomes impossible when we pass from this question of general emphasis to specific theories. The author of the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* makes an absolute equation of the waking and dream states after the fashion of Gauḍapāda. Śaṃkara may liken the two to each other, but he is careful to distinguish them. Again, and most decisive of all, the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* accepts the classical theory of the three truth values, the existent, the non-existent and that which is *anirvacanīya*, indescribable as being either existent or non-existent. The workaday world according to the classical theory is *anirvacanīya*.

"Now, Paul Hacker has pointed out that when Śaṃkara uses the word *anirvacanīya*, he uses it in a sense quite different from that of the classical theory. He uses the term in connection with his theory of creation. Before creation primary matter, which he calls *nāmarūpe*, was in a state of *anirvacanīyatva*. It was an indistinguishable mass—*tattvānyatvābhyām anirvacanīya*, a mass in which one could describe nothing as being a this or a that. There is no implication here as to the state of its existence."

Robert E. Gussner later confirmed Ingalls' rejection of Śaṅkara's authorship of the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* by a detailed word-frequency study, comparing it with Śaṅkara's *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*, which had previously been shown to be by the same Śaṅkara who wrote the *Brahma-sūtra* commentary. This study is: "Śaṅkara's Crest Jewel of Discrimination: A Stylometric Approach to the Question of Authorship," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 4, 1977, pp. 265-278.

Earlier, before this type of study had been started with Hacker's 1950 article, S. K. Belvalkar had rejected Śaṅkara's authorship of the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* on other grounds. He writes in his *Shree Gopal Basu Mallik Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy*, (delivered December, 1925), Part 1: Lectures 1-6, Poona: Bilvakuñja Publishing House, 1929, p. 225: "A large majority of these texts can be declared as unauthentic, especially when we find them to . . . or to advocate ideas* like—'Anāder api vidhvaṃsaḥ Prāgabhāvasya vīkṣitaḥ' (where the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika division into different kinds of Negations—against which Śaṅkara has expressed himself so emphatically in the Br[ahma]. S[ūtra]. Bhāṣya *apud* II.i.18—is tacitly assumed). *Compare Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, st. 202. " Thus there is considerable evidence that the *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* was not

written by the same Śaṅkara who wrote the extant commentaries. For us, this is evidence that it was written by the original Śaṅkarācārya.

Belvalkar, in the lecture just cited, provided the first and still the only comprehensive evaluation of the authenticity of virtually all the works attributed to Śaṅkarācārya. Belvalkar utilized for this "a careful compilation of the data deducible from all the minor and major works attributed to Śaṅkarācārya made by my student, friend and colleague, Mr. R. D. Vadekar" (see his preface, p. v). On the basis of Aufrecht's *Catalogus Catalogorum*, the descriptive catalogues of the Government Oriental Library, Madras, and the various published editions of his collected writings, they were able to enumerate 408 works attributed to Śaṅkarācārya. Of these, Belvalkar accepted 24 as genuine, 26 as questionable, and 358 as not genuine works of Śaṅkarācārya. Among the 24 genuine ones, he included the commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtras*, on nine of the Upaniṣads, and on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, as well as eight hymns (*stotras*), and five shorter works (*prakaraṇas*). For the hymns and shorter works he used such criteria as whether there exist traditional commentaries on them.

At about this same time, Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya evaluated the authenticity of Śankara's authorship of the various commentaries on the various Upaniṣads in his paper, "Śaṅkara's Commentaries on the Upaniṣads," published in *Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes*, vol. 3, Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1925, pp. 101-110. Here he rejects Śaṅkara's authorship of those on the *Kena* (*vākya-bhāṣya*), *Śvetāśvatara*, *Māṇḍūkya*, and *Nṛsiṃhapūrvatāpanīya* Upaniṣads, although he accepts Śaṅkara's authorship of the *Kena pada-bhāṣya*. On the *Kena Upaniṣad*, note that Śaṅkara's authorship of both the *pada-bhāṣya* and the *vākya-bhāṣya* are accepted by Mayeda in his 1967 article cited above. Sangam Lal Pandey agrees with Bhattacharya in accepting that of only the *Kena pada-bhāṣya* in his article, "Authentic Works of Śaṃkarācārya," *Journal of the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute*, vol. 24, 1968, pp. 161-177, but disagrees with him on Śaṅkara's authorship of the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* commentary. Pandey, like Mayeda in his 1967-68 article cited above, accepts Śaṅkara's authorship of this commentary. Most scholars , both Indian and Western, would agree with Pandey's conclusion that the genuine works of Śaṅkara are his commentaries on *Brahma-sūtras*, on the ten principal Upaniṣads, and on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and besides these commentaries, only the *Upadeśa-sāhasrī*. This of course, from our perspective, would be the later Śaṅkarācārya.

Śaṅkara's authorship of the commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* attributed to him has been discussed by several Indian scholars. B. N.

Krishnamurti Sarma accepts it in his article, "Śaṃkara's Authorship of the Gītā-bhāṣya," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute,* vol. 14, 1932-33, pp. 39-60. R. D. Karmarkar rejects it in his article, "Did Śaṅkarācārya Write a Bhāṣya on the Bhagavadgītā?," in the same journal, vol. 39, 1958, pp. 365-371. W. R. Antarkar in turn accepts it in his article, "Śri Śaṅkarācārya's Authorship of the Gītā-Bhāṣya," *Oriental Thought,* vol. 6, no. 2, June 1962, pp. 1-26. At this point comes Sengaku Mayeda's 1965 article on this, cited above, which also accepts it. Then Indian scholar Anam Charan Swain, citing Hacker but not Mayeda, again doubts it in his article, "Authenticity of the *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* Attributed to Śaṃkarācārya," *Mysore Orientalist,* vol. 2, no. 1, March 1969, pp. 32-37. Nonetheless, the great consensus of Indian scholars is to accept its authenticity; i.e., that it is by the same Śaṅkara who wrote the commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras.*

As to the shorter works attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, we may note that some of these have been shown to be wrongly attributed to him. When the *Sarva-siddhānta-saṃgraha* was first published in 1909, the editor and translator, M. Rangacharya, in his introduction defended Śaṅkara's authorship of it. This was countered by B. N. Krishnamurti Sarma in his article, "A Note on the Authorship of Sarvasiddhānta-Saṃgraha," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute,* vol. 12, 1930-31, pp. 93-96, who said it must have been written by a post-Śaṅkara Advaitin. This has been shown to be the case with at least three other works. The *Prabodha-sudhākara* attributed to Śaṅkara was shown by V. Raghavan to have actually been written by Daivajña Sūrya Paṇḍita. He showed this on the basis of manuscript colophons, etc., in his article, "The Nṛsimha Campū of Daivajña Sūrya Paṇḍita and the Nṛsimhavijñāpana of Śrī Nṛsimhāśramin," *Adyar Library Bulletin,* vol. 1, part 1, Feb. 1937, pp. 42-47 (see p. 44). Raghavan similarly showed on the basis of colophons that the *Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṃgraha* attibuted to Śaṅkara was actually written by Sadānanda in his article, "Minor Works Wrongly Ascribed to Ādi Śankara," *Annals of Oriental Research,* University of Madras, vol. 6, part 1, 1941-42, pp. 5-8. Then in a note in W. Norman Brown's *The Saundaryalaharī or Flood of Beauty,* traditionally ascribed to Śaṅkarācārya (Harvard Oriental Series, 43; 1958, pp. 29-30), V. Raghavan reports a manuscript colophon saying that the author of this work is Śaṅkarācārya, head of the Sarasvatīpīṭha at Srividyānagara; in other words, a later Śaṅkarācārya.

44. "The Age of Srī Sankarāchārya," *The Theosophist,* vol. 11, Feb. 1890, pp. 263-264 (see note 10 above).

45. Of course, not all the shorter works attributed to Śaṅkarācārya

were actually written by the original Śaṅkarācārya. But there is good evidence that many were. Citsukhācārya in his *Bṛhat Śaṅkara-vijaya* not only names but also gives in full many of these. Narayana Sastry often cites their opening and closing verses from Citsukhācārya in his notes, which describe more than forty shorter works. He notes when printed editions or manuscripts of these works exist. It is clear that the extant versions match those given by Citsukhācārya. Interestingly, Narayana Sastry also notes that although Citsukhācārya names Śaṅkara's *bhāṣyas* or commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtras,* Upaniṣads, and *Bhagavad-gītā,* he does not cite them: "Excepting the Bhāshyas which are simply referred to, almost all the minor works of Śaṅkara are collected and given in his work with the occasion on which they were composed" (op. cit., p. 40 fn.). So for the commentaries we have nothing to check the extant versions against. Also noteworthy is the fact that Narayana Sastry makes no mention of the *Upadeśa-sāhasrī,* the one verse work that modern scholars agree on as being genuine, i.e., as being by the same Śaṅkara who wrote the extant commentaries. This supports our view that these works were not written by the original Śaṅkarācārya.

46. The first English translation of the *Brahma-sūtra* commentary of Śaṅkarācārya was that by George Thibaut published in the Sacred Books of the East series, vols. 34 and 38, 1890 and 1896 (see note 42). This had been preceded by a German translation in 1887, done by Paul Deussen. As for Śaṅkara's Upaniṣad commentaries, the first chapter only of that on the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* was translated by E. Röer and published in the Bibliotheca Indica series, no. 2, vol. 3, 1856. It was not until 1934 that the first complete translation of this commentary was published, done by Swami Madhavananda. Most of Śaṅkara's other Upaniṣad commentaries were first published in 5 vols. from 1898 to 1901, translated by S. Sitarama Sastri and Ganganath Jha. These are on the *Īśa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Taittirīya, Aitareya,* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣads.* That on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad,* along with Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā,* had been published in 1894, translated by Manilal N. Dvivedi. Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* was first translated by A. Mahadeva Sastri and published in 1897.

47. "The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom," trans. by Mohini M. Chatterji, *The Theosophist,* vol. 7, 1885-86, pp. 65-68, 253-258, 385-390, 661-665, 724-732; vol. 9, 1887-88, pp. 23-35, 124-128, 158-162. This was published in book form, with added Sanskrit text, as *Viveka-chūdāmaṇi, or Crest-Jewel of Wisdom,* Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1st ed., 1932; several reprintings, with the spelling, *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi.* Another translation by Charles Johnston appeared in the *Oriental Department*

Papers of the Theosophical Society in America, 1894-1897; published in book form as *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom (Vivekachudamani)*, New York: Quarterly Book Department, 1925; again in *The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom and Other Writings of Śankarāchārya*, Covina, California: Theosophical University Press, 1946; this book reprinted, San Diego: Point Loma Publications, 1993. For Sanskrit students, the translation by Swami Madhavananda usually follows the Sanskrit more closely than the two above do: *Vivekachudamani,* Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1921; several reprintings from Calcutta, with the spelling, *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi.*

Four other short works of Śaṅkarācārya were published in *The Theosophist* while Blavatsky was living:

[*Ātmānātma-viveka*] "Discrimination of Spirit and Not-Spirit," trans. by Mohinee M. Chatterjee, vol. 4, Nov. 1882, pp. 30-31; vol. 5, Dec. 1883, pp. 70-72.

[*Ātma-bodha*] "The Atma Bodh, of Srimat Sankaracharya," trans. by B. P. Narasimmiah, vol. 6, Nov. 1884, p. 36; Feb. 1885, pp. 101-106.

[*Praśnottara-ratna-mālikā*] "Prasnottarararatnamalika (A Necklace of Gem-like Questions and Answers)," trans. not stated, vol. 9, Jan. 1888, pp. 249-257.

[*Advaita-pañca-ratna*, or *Advaita-pañcaka*, or *Ātma-pañcaka*] "Ode on Self," trans. by A. G., vol. 9, Mar. 1888, p. 374 (here called "Atma-Khatak," and having six rather than five verses).

Five works of Śaṅkarācārya were reprinted in: *A Compendium of the Raja Yoga Philosophy, Comprising the Principal Treatises of Shrimat Sankaracharya and Other Renowned Authors,* published by Tookaram Tatya, Bombay: Bombay Theosophical Publication Fund, 1888. These are: *Aparokṣānubhūti,* trans. Manilal Nab[h]ubhai Dvivedi; *Ātmānātma-viveka,* Mohinee M. Chatterjee; *Ātma-bodha,* B. P. Narasimmiah; *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi,* Mohini M. Chatterji (incomplete, stops with verse 450; the remaining 133 verses, from the last two installments of *The Theosophist,* were left out); *Carpaṭa-pañjarī* (or *Moha-mudgara,* or *Bhaja-govindam*), J. N. Parmanand.

The *Aparokṣānubhūti* had been published in: *Rája Yoga, or The Practical Metaphysics of the Vedánta: Being a Translation of the Vákyasudhá or Drigdrishyaviveka of Bháratitirtha, and the Aparokshánubhuti of Shri Shankarácharya,* by Manilal Nabhubhai Dvivedi, Bombay: "Subodha-Prakasha" Printing Press, 1885. Note that the *Vākya-sudhā* is sometimes attributed to Śaṅkarācārya.

Four more short works of Śaṅkarācārya were published in *The Theosophist* shortly after Blavatsky's death, all of them translated by B. P. Narasimmiah:

"Sri Sankaracharya's Mahavakyadarpanam, or The Mirror of Mystic Expressions," vol. 13, May, June, Aug. 1892, pp. 503-508, 527-530, 679-683; vol. 14, Oct., Nov. 1892, pp. 16-20, 88-94.

"Srí Sankarácháryá's Harimídastotram, or The Hymn Praising Vishnu," vol. 14, Mar. 1893, pp. 359-367.

"Sri Sankarácháryá's Swátmánirúpanam, or (The Description of One's Own Átmá)," vol. 14, Apr.-July 1893, pp. 403-407, 495-498, 558-562, 618-622.

"Śrí Śankarácharya's Tatva Bodh," vol. 14, Sep. 1893, pp. 735-740. The *Tattva-bodha* is like a catechism of Advaita Vedānta.

48. Paul Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaiṣṇavism," in Halbfass, ed., *Philology and Confrontation*, p. 33. The wording used here differs slightly from that found in its first publication, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens*, vol. 9, 1965, p. 147. This is due to the fact that "a few minor stylistic changes were made in Hacker's English texts" by the 1995 editor, Wilhelm Halbfass (see p. 352). I agree that these changes only put the passage into better and clearer English, and did not at all alter the author's meaning.

49. Halbfass, ed., *Philology and Confrontation*, p. 94. See note 43 above.

50. This letter was first published in "Echoes from the Past," *The Theosophist*, vol. 28, June 1907, quotation from p. 702 (this printing has "impressional" for "impersonal"); reprinted in *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, compiled by C. Jinarajadasa, [First Series,] Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1919, no. XXX, p. 79; 5th ed., 1964, p. 66. Corrections were made in the third edition, where this letter was now "transcribed from the original at Adyar." In the 1907 printing it is dated 1881. Jinarajadasa says its date is probably 1882.

51. *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, transcribed and compiled by A. T. Barker, 1st ed., 1923; 3rd rev. ed., Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1962, p. 52; chronological ed., Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines: Theosophical Publishing House, 1993, p. 269.

52. *The Mahatma Letters*, 3rd ed., p. 52; chron. ed., p. 270. *Avidyā* means ignorance, and *māyā* means the great delusion, or illusion. Īśvara, God, is defined in standard Advaita Vedānta works as Brahman associated with ignorance (*avidyā*), or with illusion (*māyā*). See, for example: *Pañcadaśī* 1.16, 3.37; and *Vedāntasāra* 37, 142.

53. *The Mahatma Letters*, 3rd ed., p. 53; chron. ed., p. 271.

54. *The Mahatma Letters*, 3rd ed., p. 53; chron. ed., p. 270.

55. *The Mahatma Letters*, 3rd ed., pp. 139-140; chron. ed., p. 284.

56. From a letter published under the title, "A Mental Puzzle,"

signed, "One of the Hindu founders of the parent Theosophical Society. Tiruvallam Hills, May 17." *The Theosophist*, vol. 3, June 1882, Supplement, p. 7.

57. *The Gita As It Was: Rediscovering the Original Bhagavadgita*, by Phulgenda Sinha, La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1986, p. xiv. In this book, Sinha eliminates as not original all the verses of the *Bhagavad-gītā* that he considers to be theistic, thus reducing its 700 verses to 84. This, however, from the standpoint of the Wisdom Tradition, is not necessary. All we need are the original commentaries on it, to explain these verses properly. On Indian history, Sinha's overall thesis of the early greatness and later decline is largely corroborated in the classic work, *The Wonder That Was India: A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent before the Coming of the Muslims*, by A. L. Basham, New York: Macmillan, 1954.

58. Sinha, *The Gita As It Was*, p. 93.

59. Sinha, *The Gita As It Was*, p. 95.

60. Sinha, *The Gita As It Was*, p. 101.

61. Cenkner, *A Tradition of Teachers*, pp. 139-140.

62. Cenkner, *A Tradition of Teachers*, p. 116.

63. *Sankaracharya*, by T. M. P. Mahadevan, New Delhi: National Book Trust, India, 1968, p. 54.

64. Mahadevan, *Sankaracharya*, p. 64.

65. In "The Mystery of Buddha" (*Blavatsky Collected Writings*, vol. 14, pp. 388-399), we are told that Gautama Buddha, due to compassion on the one hand and his vows of secrecy on the other, had given out partial truths, and that this resulted in their being misunderstood. Therefore part of him, his intermediate principles, came back with the incarnation of Śaṅkarācārya in order to rectify this problem. It is not hard to deduce that what the Buddha left out, and what Śaṅkara brought out, is the teaching of the one life. Blavatsky writes:

"Gautama had sworn inviolable secrecy as to the Esoteric Doctrines imparted to Him. In His immense pity for the ignorance—and as its consequence the sufferings—of mankind, desirous though He was to keep inviolate His sacred vows, He failed to keep within the prescribed limits. While constructing His Exoteric Philosophy (the 'Eye-Doctrine') on the foundations of eternal Truth, He failed to conceal certain dogmas, and trespassing beyond the lawful lines, caused those dogmas to be misunderstood. . . .

"His new doctrine, which represented the outward dead body of the Esoteric Teaching without its vivifying Soul, had disastrous effects: it was never correctly understood, and the doctrine itself was rejected

by the Southern Buddhists. Immense philanthropy, a boundless love and charity for all creatures, were at the bottom of His unintentional mistake; but Karma little heeds intentions, whether good or bad, if they remain fruitless. If the 'Good Law,' as preached, resulted in the most sublime code of ethics and the unparalleled philosophy of things external in the visible Kosmos, it biassed and misguided immature minds into believing there was nothing more under the outward mantle of the system, and its dead-letter only was accepted. . . . (p. 388)

"Thus, fifty odd years after his death 'the great Teacher' having refused full Dharmakāya and Nirvāṇa, was pleased, for purposes of Karma and philanthropy, to be reborn. . . . He was reborn as Śaṃkara, the greatest Vedāntic teacher of India, whose philosophy—based as it is entirely on the fundamental axioms of the eternal Revelation, the Śruti, or the primitive Wisdom-Religion, as Buddha from a different point of view had before based His—finds itself in the middle ground between the too exuberantly veiled metaphysics of the orthodox Brāhmans and those of Gautama, which, stripped in their exoteric garb of every soul-vivifying hope, transcendental aspiration and symbol, appear in their cold wisdom like crystalline icicles, the skeletons of the primeval truths of Esoteric Philosophy" (p. 389).

This clearly relates to (I do not say counters) the doctrine of *anātman*, "no self," found throughout Buddhism, and the doctrine of *śūnyatā*, "emptiness," found in Northern Buddhism. This latter, the Madhyamaka teaching, is commonly understood as nihilism, despite the insistence of its adherents that it is the "middle way" between eternalism and nihilism. Not only do modern Western writers sometimes understand it as nihilism, but also past Hindu and Jaina writers. M. Hiriyanna, in his *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932), says in his Preface:

"The view taken here of the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism is that it is pure nihilism, but some are of the opinion that it implies a positive conception of reality. The determination of this question from Buddhistic sources is difficult, the more so as philosophic considerations become mixed with historical ones. Whatever the fact, the negative character of its teaching is vouched for by the entire body of Hindu and Jaina works stretching back to times when Buddhism was still a power in the land of its birth. The natural conclusion to be drawn from such a consensus of opinion is that, in at least one important stage of its development in India, the Mādhyamika doctrine *was* nihilistic; and it was not considered inappropriate in a book on Indian philosophy to give prominence to this aspect of it" (pp. 7-8).

To offset the nihilism resulting from his teachings, Buddha in part returned in Śaṅkara to teach the one life. When we know this, some of Śaṅkara's words take on new meaning. The First Noble Truth taught in Buddhism is that of suffering, *duḥkha.* Suffering is said to arise because of the conception of a permanent self, *ātman.* The three defining teachings which characterize all of Buddhism are therefore: suffering (*duḥkha*), impermanence (*anitya*), and no self (*anātman*). The original Śaṅkarācārya says in his *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi,* verse 379: "Abandoning the thought of no self (*anātman*), which is base and the cause of suffering (*duḥkha*), think of the self (*ātman*), whose nature is bliss, and which is the cause of liberation." Further, the teaching that everything is empty, *śūnya,* was added in Northern Buddhism to the first three. Compare the original Śaṅkara's *Aparokṣānubhūti,* verse 29: "It is established that in your own body and yet beyond the body is the lustrous, existing self called the *puruṣa.* Why, O foolish one, do you make the self (*ātman*) empty (*śūnya*) [i.e., non-existent]?"

Śaṅkarācārya came and brought out the teaching of a non-dual reality, of *ātman,* the self of all, as identical with Brahman; in other words, the one life. According to what we have just seen, this was to fill in a big gap in the wisdom teachings brought out by the Buddha. But this, too, had its problems, falling into theism. And it is the Buddhist teachings which in return counter this problem.

ADDENDA
February 2007

Here listed are some important materials obtained after the foregoing article was written:

Antarkar, W. R. "The Date of Śaṅkarācārya." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay,* n.s., vols. 67-68, 1992-93, pp. 1-20.

Antarkar, W. R. "The Place of Śaṅkara's Final Disappearance." *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay,* n.s., vol. 71, 1996, pp. 1-22.

Gokhale, Malati. "Authorship of the Balabodhini Ascribed to Samkaracarya." *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute,* vol. 18, 1957, pp. 186-191.

Gussner, Robert E. "A Stylometric Study of the Authorship of Seventeen Sanskrit Hymns Attributed to Śaṅkara," *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* vol. 96, no. 2, 1976, pp. 259-267.

Mishra, Parmeshwar Nath. *Era of Adi Shankaracharya: 507 BC - 475 BC.* Howrah: Samskriti Rakshak Parishad, 2003.

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We have prepared two relevant bibliographic guides after this article was written, available on this website:

Works of the Original Śaṅkarācārya.

Śaṅkarācārya's Collected Works: An Annotated Bibliography of Published Editions in Sanskrit.

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